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ABSTRACT

A review of current research indicates parallels between the strategies and perceptions involved in gender-specific chidren's games and those guiding adult corporate participation. Involving a frequently elaborate organization of rules that emphasize at once an adventurous role with few physical restrictions and the need for team play, boys' games teach the importance of being able to work creatively within a complex framework. The logical extension of these games is the adult business organization. Girls' games, however, usually operating with a very simple set of rules, stress one-on-one interaction rather than competition between groups. Girls' game behavior is ritualistic and physically limited, creating roles frequently domestic in style. It is little wonder, therefore, that when confronted with the unfamiliar game strategies of the organization, businesswomen experience a general sense of discomfort, insecurity, and estrangement. Literature offers few sound prescriptive comments, however, either about using games to expand girls' organizational and boys' interpersonal skills, or about helping women learn corporate strategies. (MM)

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Gender Socialization from Child's Play to Organizational Gaming: Roots of Female Corporate Participation in Children's Games

Presented by Anita Kathy Foeman
at the
Eastern Communication Association
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Introduction

The level of female participation in the work force has continually risen since the advent of the second World War. Despite this fact, women continue to be frustrated in their attempts to move into executive level positions. The U.S. Labor Department reports, based on adjusted 1970 census statistics, that fewer than 1% of corporate executives are females. According to other U.S. Labor Department statistics, 90% of the population earning over $15,000 per year is white and male.

Many valid explanations have been put forth in regard to these phenomena. Such explanations range from the quite obvious to the most apparently innocuous factors. Somewhere along this continuum lies an explanation based upon gender differences in corporate game strategies.

The playing of games is one of the most universal and important experiences of childhood. Though most normal children play games, the types of games they play and the way they play them differ substantially. Most obvious among the differences that have been observed is the segregation of the sexes. Boys and girls both play games but rarely do they play games together. Instead, they tend to exclude each other from the games that are traditionally linked to and practiced by members of their own sex.

This paper explores some of the ramifications of gender differences in the play of children. The thesis is that games tend to prepare children for adult roles, and therefore may produce substantial effects not only on personal relations but on professional ones as well. It has been said by some that the performance of women in professional settings is negatively affected by their lack of ability to "play the game." Many women may be inadequately prepared to play such games because they are conditioned to play games according to different rules--

rules learned in the games they played as children. This paper examines the possibility in the following manner: (1) by describing the interactional qualities of organizational settings; (2) by describing the structure and normative practices of childhood play; (3) by describing the teaching qualities and the linear development of a game perspective; (4) by suggesting structural and normative parallels between game and corporate situations.

Authors and researchers of organizational phenomena are more and more commonly using the game metaphor to describe the condition and functioning of the work place. The metaphor is then used to make specific statements concerning the participation of individuals in the game. Popular publications such as The Executive Game (Henshaw, 1978), The Gamesman (Maccoby, 1976), Alice in Corporation Land (in Cravens, 1977), and Games Mother Never Taught You (Harrigan, 1977) are examples of this genre.

The game methaphor seems particularly appropriate to the corporate context in that adult work, like child's play, is an important, almost inseparable, part of most day-to-day experience. Also work like play is a most time-consuming part of life which is treated somehow as not a part of life. Bateson (1954) clarifies stating that certain meta-messages occurring in play negate certain behaviors which otherwise would have severe interpersonal ramifications. Thus, under the condition of play, Bateson explains in his article "This is Play", the message becomes, "These actions in which we now engage do not denote what those actions for which they stand would denote." (p. 148). Thus, Billy says, "I killed you--because that's how the game is played--it's nothing personal." and in a parallel manner Bill says, "I have to reprimand you--it's nothing personal--just business." A Batesonian paradox exists in that a "real" reprimand has taken place with real reprocussions, and yet Bill must accept that this is business and whether he likes it or not (and whether he is liked or not) the affront is within the work context and, therefore is not "personal." Of course, people do make personal affronts in the name of "the book" and decisions based on "the book" are taken personally and yet, the accepted corporate game demeanor is that behavior be consistent with the "just business" context.

The game/not game distinction, according to Bateson is an indication that higher order learning processes are in operation. In effect, participants are responding to higher order classes or categories of behaviors. Using this concept again as a work metaphor one may see how the ability to make such distinctions can act as an intuitively innocuous but potentially powerful screening process. Such processes may determine, in fact, who may "play the game" and who may not. Betty Lehaan Harrigan argues along these lines in Games Mother Never Taught You that, "Women have not been excluded from organizations but from the organization game."

In an examination of several publications in the area of female corporate participation, four basic problem areas tend to result from the inability of many women to make certain distinctions appropriate to executive level functioning.

Many women manifest 1) a general inability to identify a specific game context, 2) a feeling of discomfort and anomie in an unfamiliar context, 3) a knee-jerk type of response to problems in the absence of an overall game conception, and 4) an inability to function as a team player.

During the following discussion, consider this statement which might be typical of a working woman, and consider the four points to be developed.

> Listen, I love my job; I know I'm lucky to have this position, but since the new boss came in all kinds of things are happening that I can't figure out.
>
> ...Well, the men seem to know what's going on. This new guy is a real pig; the men know it, and yet they're ultra friendly to him. I stay away. I'm really busy just doing my work. Who has time for politics.
>
> (Cravens, 1977, p.15)

Such comments point to the naivete and general lack of ease with which many women approach the corporate game.

This section focuses upon the problems of women in business. This discussion does not suggest that many women have not made appropriate adjustments for corporate gaming or that any one woman embodies all of these problems. This section does identify major problems of many working women and later suggests a relationship between problems of women in the corporate setting and an ineffectual childhood game history.

(1) Many women have a general inability to grasp a sense of playing a game. Women may see that, "The men seem to know what's going on," but are unaware that there is a systematic strategy. Men on the other hand have learned early that the game is governed by rules and that how one plays does count. A woman who backs away saying, "I do my job well and I don't have time for politics" is showing her business naivete. In the business world, as in sophisticated games, if you don't play by the rules (implicit and explicit) you don't play at all. Business people describe corporate manners as "the manners of a society whose members are bent both on winning and sheer survival," (Hennig, 1977, p.17). One vice president of a service company explained the situation saying, "Effecting a pragmatic business style involves some delicate role playing. It doesn't mean talking sports necessarily, but it does mean leaving the needlepoint at home," (Hennig, 1977, p.17). It does mean knowing the game. It does mean making certain work/not work distinctions and making appropriate decisions on that basis.

Lawrence Rosenfield's statement in The Communicative Experience (1976) gives insight to women's plight, stating that in any good game the rules become so effectively inculcated into the interactions that they are no longer an issue unless they are violated. A woman in business is likely to violate rules with regularity if she is unaware of the game context.

(2) Many women feel uncomfortable with their participation in organizations. Perhaps as a result of an unfamiliarity with male game playing, women tend to experience anomie, have low self-perceptions and tend to credit themselves with very little in terms of self-advancement skills and creative input (Fenn 1976). It is not uncommon to hear a woman assume that she is "lucky to have this position." Deaux, Kaner, and Emswiller (1974) found in a game playing study that women have little sense of impact or control and tend to contribute success to "luck"--a force outside of their control. Male success was attributed to skill. In a 1975 study of women and men playing laboratory and carnival games, Deaux, et al., found women selecting games of luck over games of skill. Females are not likely to take risks or "play the odds." Women fail to take risks when it is important to do so. They often opt for security over recognition. Minahan (1975) describes the phenomenon of the woman who is constantly down-playing herself. If, for example, a woman is complimented on an attractive dress, she will tell where she bought it, indicate what she paid for it, and explain that it's really old. Minahan describes such female corporate behavior as insecure and defensive. Obviously, such statements do not apply to every woman across the board, but, they are significant problems for significant numbers of women.

Female discomfort does not necessarily grow out of a problem playing the games of business. The research does not suggest such a conclusion. Women do have problems playing these games as males do, however. While female strategies are not completely inconsistent or incompatible with organizational goals, corporate business has traditionally been conducted in a masculine manner and often integration of the two systems is difficult. In addition, many women carry over some strategies and insecurities which do not readily merge with traditional corporate goals. Often women experience confusion in their attempts to distinguish problems from simple differences, and since most women have only limited exposure to the corporate context, real perspective is difficult to establish. Often men are insensitive to women who struggle to distinguish among the alternatives. It is simply not a male priority to lessen female corporate insecurity.

When men in a work situation feel uncomfortable with, threatened by, or hostile toward women, there is little reason to expect them to allow women into the informal networks which are so vital to organizational advancement--especially when there is little precedent for doing so (Zackarias, 1976; Caverns, 1976; Gomberg, 1979). Affirmative action legislation has recently forced equal selection of female applicants in specific areas of formal corporate participation. But, informal connections remain difficult.

In an "old boy" network, women struggle with two confounding conditions. First, Hennig (1977) has observed that women have difficulty finding mentors to assist them in developing credibility and savvy. Second, many women have difficulty in negotiating up for power and/or favors. Deaux, et al., (1974, 1975)

report that females have trouble negotiating up for power under adult game conditions. Thus, the likelihood is that men will not approach women in a mentoring capacity and women will not approach men for guidance.

(3) Many women are short-sighted, tending to evaluate short term but not long term repercussions. Hennig (1977) and Wood (1978) in their interviews with business executives have identified the failure of women to develop a perspective--a long term game plan. Too often women see a "here and now" but have a general nearsightedness about long term consequences. They do not tend to identify complexities of a short term situation; much as the woman who states in digust, "The new guy is a real pig; the men know it, and yet they're ultra friendly to him." Hennig (1977) tells of a woman who sees a co-worker slacking off on his job. She exerts extreme pressure on her supervisor to have this co-worker fired. What she fails to consider is that this particular co-worker has strong connnections in the informal network in which the big boss is a member. She fails to anticipate the long term repercussions of forcing the hand of her superviser. She has oversimplified the situation and thus failed to identify conflicting messages. She also fails to see the priority of messages.

(4) Many women have problems working in a team situation. They tend to prefer more comfortably intimate surroundings. Lever (1977) reports that females indicate the highest degree of comfort in dyadic interactions and least comfort in groups (the opposite is true of males). Lever (1974) further argues that women have great difficulty in relationships with superpersonal rules--rules existing external to the particular interpersonal relationship--conversely males express that rules and not individuals make a game. This theory is consistent with

Craven's (1977) and Hennig's (1977) findings that women prefer to operate on an interpersonal level even when the situation does not warrant such behavior. Brockhurst (1979) reports, in fact, that women forced to work in small group situations make as many task oriented statements as men but twice as many maintenance (interpersonal) statements, suggesting much greater (perhaps disproportionate) interpersonal concern. Similarly, Viniche (1959) observed in three person games that women prefer an accommodative, more interpersonal style so much that they will band in dyads against powerful players. Such findings are supported by similar adult game studies in the 1960's (Bond, et al., 1961; Uesugi, 1963).

Unfortunately, the highly interpersonal leanings of women in combination with a general feeling that she is "lucky" to be in the organization may act as a double-edged sword against them. Women tend to focus on interpersonal relationships and tend to accept praise or criticism as indications, not of productivity, but of a personal relationship with a superior. If a woman is criticized, she may respond to the form and not the content of the message, thus gaining little from the information provided. If she receives praise her reaction is highly personal and she is likely to respond with strong feelings of fidelity. Harrigan (1977) identifies this phenomenon as one of the factors that keep women from moving beyond a job in which they have had a high level of success.

CHILDREN'S GAMES

Obviously, histrionics, economics, and sociology come into play in determining the problems of women in corporations. An examination of children's games offers some specific and additional explanations for differences between male

and female work styles. This section shall examine childhood play patterns and attempt to draw some connection between game styles and work styles as they work to effect gender specific behaviors.

Children (individuals between ages 5 and 12) engage in many playful activities such as skipping to school or daydreaming in class. This paper, however, focuses on the transactions which take place between and among children; hence the term play is used here to mean some child initiated, free-time, organized activity, which brings children into interaction. Play is not meant to include games centered around some complex toy. Also, the terms play and game are used interchangably. Some of the games described may be played in isolation (e.g., jacks); yet, it is the group activity (e.g., two or more children playing a game of jacks) which is of concern here.

With regard to the role of children's games in social development, three points should be made initially concerning the nature of play in a child's life: (1) games tend to be intergenerational, (2) children spend a significant amount of time at play and (3) play performs an important function for children.

Intergenerational Games

The games children play are passed down from generation to generation and are to a large degree culturally determined. According to Jean Chateau (1968, p.222) "Invented games are very rare and ephemeral. Invention is mostly linked to accidental modifications among small children and minor improvements made by older children of twelve and upwards." Games possess a surprising degree of intergenerational stability. The game "King of the Mountain," for example, dates back to an old Irish game called "Walls of Troy." Likewise, "Cowboys and

Indians" is virtually identical to a game Roman boys played in ancient days. And Roman girls, like American girls, played elaborate games of dress-up (Bartlett 1960).

However, not all games are passed down across all cultures. Few games of Oriental or African origin exist in the repertoire of American children. Cultures apparently eliminate activities which are of little use or value in promoting their systems of behavior. Evidently children play games which are culturally significant. Children's games appear to retain only those social features which reinforce a cultural frame of reference (Katz, 1974). The games of children in the U.S. growing out of the strong Judeo-Christian beliefs in this country, for example, show extensive carryover. Traditions of touching wood and iron, as "base" for example, dates back to the Christian belief that touching wood (representing the cross) or iron (representing the nails in the cross) kept one safe from harm. This tradition of touching wood has been generalized to any "base" in modern play, a superficial modification over some five or six hundred years (Bartlett 1960). Janet Lever (1974) confirms Bartlett's finding that cultural values are passed down through the playing of games. Similarly, when one recounts the history of games in a culture, one finds what is most culturally significant. Bartlett, in his historical account of children's games, offers little discussion of girls' games, mentioning only games of imitation such as "dress-up." He does mention in his discussion of Olympic Games that women, with the exception of Demeter, were excluded from even watching such masculine displays.

Thus, the stability of games over time establishes the incidence of historical conformance. In other words children's games are consistent from generation to generation. Within generations games are learned through long hours at play.

Time Spent at Play

Of the activities carried out by children, game playing is possibly the most central. Janet Lever asserts that children spend only 24% of their time outside of school in non-play activity such as doing household chores, homework, and attending religious activities. Another 24% of their nonschool time is spent in vicarious pastimes such as T.V. watching.[1] Thus, fully 52% of a child's nonschool waking time is spent in "free-play" activity. "Free play," or unsupervised amusement activity, is such an integral part of the growth and development of an individual that it has been referred to as "the work of children" (Taylor 1979, Denzin 1975.) Play may be the one active, non-obligatory activity which allows children some degree of choice. It is therefore reasonable to explore the notion that "how" and "what" children play is important in establishing an individual's world view.

Possible Functions of Play

Several views exist regarding the specific functions which games may play in socio-emotional development. A common view identifies games as a kind of socializing process created by children in order to cope with the world around them. Many academicians (Chesebro 1978, Belotti 1976, Lever 1974, Chateau 1968, Mead 1934) have viewed games as a kind of exercise in exemplars which magnifies social rules and thereby creates a matrix of appropriate roles and responses for children. Piaget (1965), in discussing the child development process concludes that games affect the cognitive functions in a child's development. These functions

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(1)Note, that while boys and girls report watching approximately the same amount of T.V., girls prefer watching family oriented situation comedies and boys prefer high adventure (Lever, 1979).

are not mutually exclusive. In fact, each offers us a variation on the theme that games function as a tool for social integration. Games are apparently consistent factors in the lives of children both between generations and within generations, and seem to perform an important socializing function. But, how do play styles differ between boys and girls?

HOW BOYS AND GIRLS PLAY

Boys and girls both play games, but seldom do they play together. They play games which they and society deem to be gender appropriate. These games differ along qualitative lines. Qualitative differences in gender-specific games shall be addressed in this section.

Smith and Williamson examine levels at which individuals integrate new behaviors into learned systems. The first level involves simple rule imitation. The second is role oriented behavior. The third is full integration. I shall examine in a similar manner 1) the simple rule structure of children's games, 2) the rule structures, and 3) the integration of games into a childhood life-style.

The popular boys' game of War and the similarly popular girls' game of Jacks are typical gender-specific games which exemplify important gender differences in terms of Rules, Roles and their integration. Consider these games in the following discussion.

Rules

In The Communicative Experience, Lawrence Rosenfield et al (1976) point out (as mentioned earlier) that in any good game, the rules become so effectively

inculcated into transactions that rules seldom are an issue--unless they are violated. Frequently such rules are difficult to identify in functional interactions. Much of the existing material focuses on differences involving 1) rule complexity, 2) requirements for interpersonal interaction, 3) the use of space. I discuss these in terms of three conditions.

The Complex-Simple Continuum

The physical movement in boys' games is governed by a complex network of rules, characterized by lengthy discussions regarding situations which might occur. Boys spend hours discussing rules of the game. Their interests grow wider than individual dkills and focus on the ability of an individual to be creative within the framework of the game.

Boys learn that in a complex game of rules, the most skilled (i.e., productive) player does not always win (Harrigan 1977). Thus, just because Bill is the best pitcher, runner, and catcher doesn't conclusively determine his team's victory. Piaget (1965) casually concludes from his study of the boys' game of marbles that not a single "girls" game had the elaborate organization of rules found in this simple boys' game.

Girls' games require very simple rules (e.g. bounce the ball and pick up the jacks) governing fine motor skills (Lever, 1974). They move into little delineation of specific situations which might occur, thus most special situations are handled by individual, ad-hoc arrangements.

The Interpersonal-Superpersonal Continuum

Girls' games are oriented to the individual and may be played alone or in teams or in turns with equal ease (Belotti 1978, Hennig 1977, Harrigan 1977, Fenn 1976). Even the most popular sports for girls follow suit, with tennis,

swimming and ice skating as typical. They stress individual rather than group effort. Thus competition is highly one-on-one. This necessitates a more interpersonal approach.

For girls, interpersonal rules govern most interactions. Often rules shift from player to player and occasion to occasion; for example, in jacks a "locked jack" may disqualify a player from the game, or a turn, or extra points.

Boys' games are team oriented. For boys the established rule structure provides limitations within which all players must function. Such rules are supra-personal for they overrule personal attitudes. As such, they provide an emotional buffer for individual players. Thus, Bill understands that John shot him because "that's how the game is played; it's nothing personal." And while Bill may not like the way the game is played, he understands that these are in fact the rules to which he must adhere. Boys learn that friendship may not override the rules. In baseball, for example, three strikes and "you're out." One may attempt to break the rules, but if one gets "caught," the rules prevail over the individual player in the vast number of situations. In a complex team game where a best friend is an opponent and an enemy is a teammate, the rules more than any personal preference govern behavior (Harrigan 1977).

The Proximal-Distal Continuum

Boys' games require large spaces and are generally played out-of-doors. Their rules allow for great movement and flexibility within a consistent structure. Female games on the other hand, like Jacks, tend to be played in close proximity, giving an opportunity for more intimate, personal interaction. In research with 3-5 year olds, Laurence Harper (1974) found that in a free-play situation preschool boys' games take between 1.2 to 1.6 as much space as girls'

games. If this qualitative difference acts as a metaphor for social attitude, one may argue that boys are being drilled to have a more worldly posture than girls. Janet Lever found close female play to encourage understanding of others' feelings and attitudes. Close interactions are highly situation specific and are governed by interpersonal arrangements.

Obviously, the rules in operation during play have definite gender implications. A review of the continua along which gender differences occur lead to the following conclusions regarding the functions of rules in childhood games:

(1) Boys' games have a more strict and complex rule structure than girls' games, thus offering a wider range of formal game behavior and interaction patterns.

(2) In girls' games the actual rules are more flexible allowing for more interpersonal interaction patterns.

(3) The rules in boys' games are more team oriented than girls' games.

(4) Rules in boys games require that play be oriented more toward the outdoors.

While rules, in isolation tell specifics about gender differences, they suggest larger, more sweeping differences associated with gender. This larger context moves one from a discussion of rules to a discussion of roles.

Roles

Social roles established in games are gender specific. Often games played exclusively by girls tend to be domestic and/or aesthetic in nature (playing house, making up or chanting rhymes about "love and marriage"). As early as 2 years of age one finds female children imitating directly the behavior of their mothers. Boys are less likely to imitate directly the behavior that they observe

from the fathers. Generally, boys play is more active and worldly. They are more likely to behave as they think their fathers behave at work (Austin 1978). Thus, children are not simply reinacting what they see, but they are in fact acting out social roles. Gregory Bateson (1954) suggests that in a sense, it is unimportant to discuss the accuracy of behavior displayed in play behavior, but rather to note that the child makes some identification with the role at all, thus the play behavior begins to map the domain. Mark Brenner (1976) while not confirming the findings regarding sex differences in play preference for preschool children, finds that play activities of the household variety tend to promote more social/interpersonal role behavior.

In play that does not imitate adult behavior the male/female role distinction persists. In "girls'" play there is a general tendency to accommodate novice players by playing down to their level in an almost maternal fashion (Harrigan 1977). When playing with a small child, a girl is likely to throw the game or muddle through it, imitating the style of the less proficient player (a kind of empathetic behavior). It is not uncommon to see older girls using baby talk while playing with little children or dragging the smallest child around by the hand. A small boy, on the other hand, may be allowed to participate in a baseball game with older boys but he must do his best to play up to the level of the best player. "Sink or swim." If he can't cut it, he doesn't play (Harrigan 1977).

This adjustment to the lowest common denominator on the part of females in the game playing situation may actually be an interaction of (1) the highly interpersonal nature of female games which has the potential for creating high interpersonal stakes and (2) the highly competitive one-on-one nature of any game

which focuses on the individual rather than the team. Girls realize a superior player may have solely negative implications for game play (Fenn 1976). In a small, simplistic, individualistic set-up requiring a few specific, highly regularized behaviors (e.g. bounce the ball and pick up the jacks), it is not surprising to find that a single star player can run away with the game every time. One star player may eliminate the challenge of the game altogether.

In a boys' game the role of a star player is more complex. First, as suggested, in a large, complex game with involved rules, the single most skillful player doesn't always win. It's easier to find some exploitable weakness in an individual player when more diverse behaviors are required. Second, an opposing team may band together to counterbalance the superior skills of one star player. Third, in a team situation the star player is not an isolated unit. He is part of a team. Thus, when John plays on the team of a star player, John is also a star by association. Thus other numbers have positive as well as negative associations with the star.

It is the lack of this positive association with the star player that makes a statement like "You really like winning at Jacks all the time, don't you, Barbara?" carry heavy negative interpersonal connotations. Therefore playing with a star or being a star can be a frustrating experience for a girl. Accommodating down, then, negates the power of the star by putting emphasis on the worst player rather than the best. (The flexibility or rules, discussed earlier, may also perform this function.)

Thus, the behaviors of males and females become more deeply ingrained at the role level. The preceding examination of gender roles offers additional insight into play differences.

(1) Boys' roles tend to be manifest in play which is bigger and more worldly.

(2) The roles displayed in girls' games tend to be aesthetic/domestic in nature.

(3) Girls play a role which tends to accommodate down in an almost maternal fashion.

(4) Boys attempt to play up to the level of the best players.

(5) Girls tend to attempt to neutralize a star player.

Sometimes roles are played out so often that they become effectively integrated into one's system of behaviors, and this integration has long term repercussions.

The Integration of Roles

Many games of girls are repetitious and noncreative. Typical of these are jacks, jump-rope, even make-up, which emphasize repeated and limited movements and chants. Such games develop fine motor skills, not intellectual ones. These games are generally shorter in duration than boys' games and require less space (Lever 1974).

These qualitative differences suggest far-reaching effects. Lever (1974) states that over time the complexity of games in youth may have a profound effect on a child's ability to learn certain behavorial patterns and may affect the individual's ability to move into certain higher level complex game-like situations, such as the corporate arena, later in life. Elena Belotti (1976) has suggested that the repetitive, low level play of girls, particularly when playing in close proximity, is representative of phobic behavior based upon obsessive ritual. Such behavior can be detrimental. One possibility is the impairment of the ability to think on an abstract level.

The above mentioned comments may be somewhat dramatic, but, in fact, ritual may significantly limit the possible range of play functions. Ritual moves the individual into an over involvement with specific behaviors and lessens the impact of context. Gregory Bateson (1959) argues that, in play, different levels of messages are operating, some of which define play as distinguished from non-play. Boys' games do make this distinction. For girls, play behavior is an extension of all other interpersonal experience. Ritual creates an excessive experience around this concept, thus in analogous situations a male may respond to conte.. and a female only to tone and style. Janet Lever (1974) states "Girls have difficulty with superpersonal (suprapersonal) rules," (p.40), thus girls tend to respond to play and non-play in a similar manner. The message, "This is nothing personal, this is just how the game is played," has little meaning to a girl who has been drilled in focusing on ritual as both end and means. Therefore, boys are learning to make fine content distinctions while girls are not. Girls are being drilled in ritual, boys are learning concepts. In the Batesonian use, one may in fact question whether the free time activities of girls constitute game playing at all.

It is not surprising to find that girls do wish to play more complex "male" games (Belotti 1976). They have found it socially unacceptable. (Slowly some of these social attitudes are changing.) Social pressure has been a means of limiting the activities of females in areas for which they would have no practical use. Chesebro (1976), while not necessarily convinced of the complexity differences, states that many sexually differentiated games have played an important role in a sexually differentiated society.

The integration of roles through games serves as an apparently innocuous channeling device in gender socialization. The following can be concluded regarding

the integration of play roles into lifestyles:

(1) Many female games are structured around ritual.

(2) Ritual limits the range of possible play functions.

(3) Ritual focuses on tone not context.

(4) Social pressure limits the amount of change possible in the gender differences in children's play.

PRESENT TRENDS

Through rules, role definitions, and their integration, games teach appropriate social behavior, and while these games tend not to change swiftly over time, sometimes the changes in society are reflected in the kinds of children who play specific kinds of games. This section discusses (1) gender shifts that have taken place in game playing, and (2) meaning of shifts in game playing preferences.

Gender Shifts in Game Playing

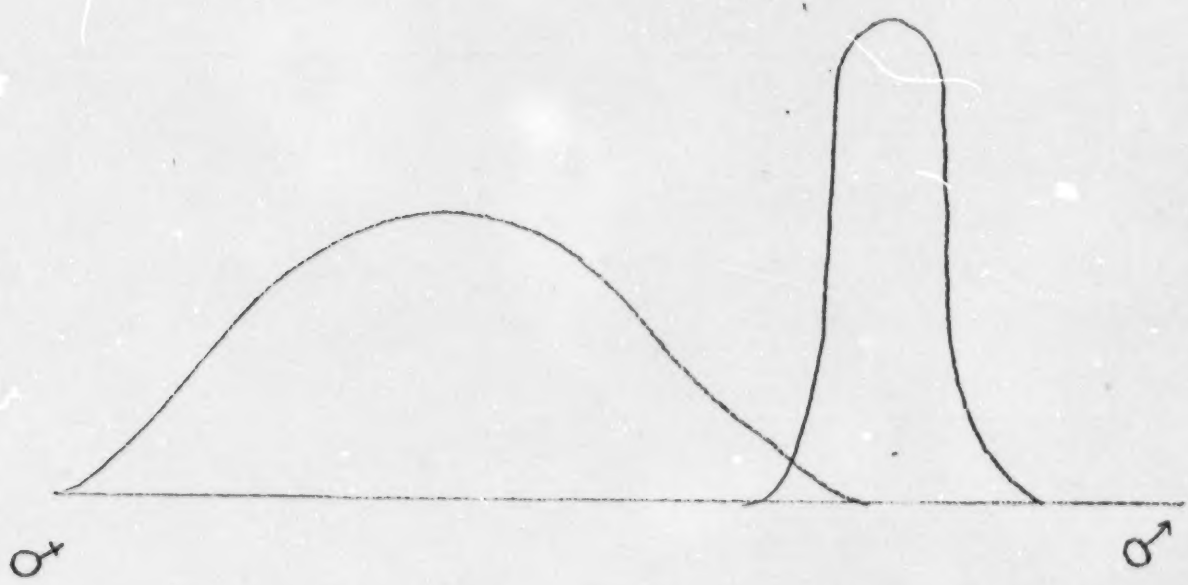
As social systems evolve, girls change their repertoire of games. In the case of U.S. children, research suggests that girls have expanded their repertoire while boys have increasingly restricted their play choices. Fagot (1979) found more social pressure for boys to play "boys' " games than for girls to play "girls' " games. Likewise, the extensive work of Sutton-Smith (1961) suggests that, over a 60 year period, girls have moved more and more toward a preference for "boys" games while boys find even greater chastisement from peers and instructors if they desire to play "girls" games. In effect, the more games girls play, the fewer games boys play. The games boys play have been so sharply curtailed that games like hopscotch (heretofore considered unisex games but which tended toward a more feminine style) have been eliminated from the male repertoire. Thus, boys' games now focus on a very limited range of activities

heightening analytic skills and ignoring the development of other competencies (especially interpersonal). Sutton-Smith concludes that the differences between boys' and girls' games continue to exist, and are possibly greater than ever.

Graphically, the changes in games identified by these researchers suggest configuration similar to the following:

(See Chart 1)

RELATIONSHIP OF THE GAMES BOYS PLAY TO THE GAMES GIRLS PLAY *



* Boys play a few very male oriented games. Girls play a wider variety of games.

The mean of girls' games has moved more toward the masculine end and the variance of girls games has increased over the past 60 years considerably. The mean of boys' games has also moved toward the more masculine and (basically because many borderline games have fallen away) and the variance of games played by boys has decreased considerably.

Meaning of Game Playing Preferences

Though there is a widening in the variety of games played by female children ages 8-12, several factors offset the social gains which one might expect. First, a difference between the games of boys and the games of girls continues to exist. The nature of the differences remains the same. Boys' games continue to reflect the norms and values of American society. The games of boys have now become a caricature of masculine style and personality (Sutton-Smith, 1961). Games like wrestling, football and ice hockey (the games that remain virtually all male) have become the paradigm of masculinity or machismo. When one wishes to identify the social/corporate values toward which the society is moving, one is still best informed by looking at these games of boys. Changes discussed in the analysis of children's games suggest a society which offers little (and progressively less) consideration of interpersonal interaction. They suggest a hard-line corporate culture which emphasizes the analytical skills in their requirement for risk-oriented thinking and contextual analysis heightened in the games of boys. They also suggest a culture which ignores the interpersonal qualities emphasized in girls' games.

Second, children desire to behave in a "sex appropriate" manner. Montemayer (1971) found that by the age of six, boys and girls desired to play games described as sex appropriate even when the actual games were identical. Subsequently,

children showed high performance when behavior was perceived as sex appropriate. In the Montemayer study, the experimenter told one sex that a particular game was "just like" some other game which was appropriate for one sex. The game involved a 15 second throwing task. For the female appropriate game, the game was "just like jacks" and for the male appropriate game, the activity was "just like basketball." Boys performed better when the game was described in masculine terms and the girls did better when the game was described in feminine terms. This study suggests that preconceived attitudes affect performance.

Third, the gains which might be expected due to an expanded female game repertoire are also offset by status ascribed to the games of boys and girls. Male games are considered more interesting and higher in status than girls' games (Belotti 1976, Lever 1974). The qualitative adjunct may be as harmful if not more so than the actual differences in play behavior. The shifts in game means suggest that what girls play becomes less attractive to boys, and boys tend to move onward and upward as girls play the catch-up game.

All in all, Betty Lehaan Harrigan (1977, p.98) concludes "Girls' games are children's games which are outgrown early in childhood and are never resumed because they have no intensic educational value; they teach nothing." Girls' games may teach a great deal, and yet, the lesson may be more detrimental than nothing at all in as much as they teach inappropriate skills and inadequate world perceptions. Belotti (1976, p.98) concludes, "For girls development can be defined as a permanent frustration."

The same children who grow up with separate and unequal play patterns begin adolescence with a cultural view that is closely tied to the games they have played. With adolescence comes even greater gender distinction in gaming.

MOVING INTO ADULTHOOD

Children enter adolescence at roughly the age of twelve, and game playing activities of males and females differ more dramatically than ever in several ways.

First, games become much more important for males than for females. At about age twelve the game playing of females tapers off while involvement of males in games does not (Harrigan 1977, Belotti 1976). One important reason cited is the lack of sophistication of most female games (Harrigan 1977).

A second reason is that the more domestic dress-up/house-playing type games are replaced by real courting activities. This transition is obligatory. Any girl who continues to play dolls into this stage is faced with pressure from peers and parents who fear that their child's socio-psychological development has been retarded (Belotti 1976). Sports such as swimming or tennis tend to taper off as fears mount of "bulging muscles" and that "girls who win all the time at tennis don't get partners" or that an athletic girl is a "tomboy" or worse (Fenn, 1976). Belotti (1976), for example, recounts the story of a girl who was beaten up repeatedly by her brother until she finally fought back. She managed to beat him by wrestling him to the ground and pinning him to the floor. The response of other children was not supportive. In fact, they began to tease her telling her that she was not like a girl at all--she was a boy, the worst affront. The idea that success at a male's game makes one less feminine may make the price of succeeding at a male's game higher than the price of withdrawing.

During adolescence a rechanneling of female activities though not roles is expected. Females become supporters, males become doers. Females are

cheerleaders, males are players. During childhood a girl is unlikely to play on a boys' team. During adolescence the phenomenon is virtually non-existent. The tradition of female non-participation in traditionally male activities is perpetuated. While female games are outgrown, public support is ever increasing for male participation. Much publicity and support are evident for male sporting activity. Play remains an important factor in masculine life.

A game orientation or metaphor continues to function as a strong cohesive force for males through adolescence and into adulthood. Davidson (1977) points out that men from all parts of the U.S., from every economic level, from diverging backgrounds, and with differing values can stand in line at the bank or at the market and talk sports. Women have no analogous common denominator. "Women's" topics, such as clothes, children, food, tend to be class specific and/or tie women to a domestic setting. More general topics (weather, health, etc.) may generally be viewed as too trivial to perform important bonding functions. Thus, the game metaphor creates for men a network which is defined both by those within it and those outside of it. Women are outside.

Sports language too is important in male adult dialogue. Expressions like, "taking the ball and running with it," "creaming the opposition," or "acting as quarterback for our team" are often ostracizing for women, both denotatively and connotatively. Even if such metaphors are familiar to women, most women don't feel comfortable using them and most men don't feel comfortable hearing women use them. Gomberg (1979) states of women in corporate board meetings, "Men don't like them there, for one reason, because they women don't know... well, can't use the language." Men feel uncomfortable in such situations when this type of easy, familiar interaction is frustrated. Discomfort breeds

contempt. Thus, in accordance with tradition, the woman's best "play" may be to try to become a "team mascot" or cheering section.

These statements bring one back to a discussion of corporate problems experienced by women. The culmination of events suggests a roughly linear sequence encouraging great differences in male/female style and perspective.

SUMMARY

As one views the levels of the analysis of male/female game behavior moving from an examination of game rules, to roles, to their integration, to a view of the overall game context, a pattern begins to unfold: Females function with a set of rules which are highly interpersonal and physically limiting; males function on a relatively high superpersonal level with fewer physical restrictions. Female rules combine to define a game role which is domestic in style and accommodates down. Boys games emphasize a more adventurous role. Often female rules culminate in ritual carrying simplistic, low level games to their logical extreme, emphasizing the limited and phobic nature of some feminine game behavior.

Organizations are the final logical extension of the male game. The organization is the point at which the traditional female game style comes into direct conflict with the male game. Predictably, women's problems are a logical extension of female game playing foiled by the male context. Women experience a general sense of estrangement, general insecurity, short-sightedness and discomfort with the team milieu.

Such a pattern, while not surprising, is frightening in that it appears to build female failure into the system.

CONCLUSIONS

Several arguments have been made regarding the relationship between adult corporate participation and childhood games. Several conclusions can be drawn as a result of this type of rhetorical argument. These conclusions center around two areas of concern 1) what has been done, and 2) what remains to be investigated.

State of Research

Research in the area of child to adult game playing tends to be scattered and inconclusive. Yet, two important arguments can be made on the basis of the existing research. One may argue convincingly that some parallel exists between the strategies and perceptions involved in children's games and the strategies and perceptions guiding adult corporate participation. These strategies and perceptions are gender specific. One may argue that the game context provides an ideal drill condition which sharpens the processes and behaviors of analogous situations. Accordingly the use of a game playing approach to the examinations of corporate behavior may prove to be useful in identifying and ultimately adjusting categories of behaviors.

A.T.&T., for example, feels so strongly about the importance of game playing for corporate development that they have produced a game for their female executives to aid these women in developing the appropriate mind-set required for corporate participation. "Games", A.T.&T. representatives state, "provide learning that can come in no other way." (Cravens 1977, p.18). Game producers have found that women and men perform differently in the game situation. Experiments have also revealed that men have several outstanding problems. Men, for example, often find themselves in a position in which they consider their best

game plan to involve either outright deception or at least misrepresentation. Thus, the game approach proved helpful to management in identifying strategies that may be inappropriate or illegal in real life circumstances.

On the basis of these conclusions alone the issue of games deserves the consideration of those who concern themselves with organizational behavior.

To be Investigated

On the other hand, the examination of the literature poses a plethora of questions on the kinds of research which remain to be carried out.

1) Little longitudinal information exists to substantiate a direct correspondence between corporate success and game history. For example, there is no evidence concerning the corporate adjustment of individuals who diverge from the typical game playing histories.

2) The heavily child-weighted nature of the game studies makes the job of relating parallel strategies quite difficult. Far more descriptive literature dealing with adult game behavior is necessary to alleviate this.

3) From a communication perspective one finds a profound need for stuides which attempt to view the game playing phenomenon from a communication (i.e. language based) standpoint. Researchers often fail to make fine but important distinctions about intra-game strategies which may be subtle but important. Those who have studied the sex differences in play, and there have been relatively few, fail to give insight as to whether a girl will play a boy's game as the boys play it or by superimposing her old strategy onto a new structure, (see, for example, Montemayer, 1971; Lever, 1974). They have looked at the games like "Jacks" or "War" which are gender-specific and appear to be quite different, and have attempted to identify the interaction of game participants

with game structures. They give little information suggesting the differences between male and female intra-game communication strategies. Somehow, a concept stated in sex appropriate terms may give an individual an edge for task success. Language content studies may be the sine qua non for identifying such distinctions.

A humorous example is offered by Letty Cottin Pogrebin (1974) in her article on toys for free children.

> Once there were two parents who decided to liberate their children from rigid male and female sex roles. They recognized that whatever they brought into their kids' environment would carry some suggestion of "correct" behavior or sex-typed expectations. No more domestic, passive toys for our daughter, said the mother. That's the end of tough-guy toys for our son, added the father.
>
> So on Christmas morning, these enlightened parents gave their little girl a shiny new truck. Under the tree was a soft cuddly doll for their little boy. The parents beamed as their children took the new toys up to the playroom.
>
> This will be the beginning of a new lifestyle said the father. Down with sexism in the nursery, said the mother.
>
> A little while later, the parents tip-toed upstairs to observe their emancipated children at play. Through the doorway they saw the little girl cradling the truck in her arms and singing -aah, aah, Baby--while the little boy was pushing his doll across the floor and bellowing--vroom, vroom, vroooomm (p.22).

4) Little research oriented literature exists which leads to sound prescriptive comments about game playing. If complex games are important to individual development, then girls must begin to play more complex games. If domestic-type games are important to the development of interpersonal skills, then boys must expand their repertoires. Educators and trainers are beginning to make such suggestions. As early as 1927 Lehnan and Witley commented "It is felt that much present day maladjustment results from an unwise choice of leisure activities."

Phillip Nabil (1975) comments on the importance of children's games in "Physical Education" identifying "sport as a social institution serving to propound, predicate, and perpetuate those values governing our interpersonal relations in the everyday life of our culture." Researchers must support or disqualify such educated hunches through empirical research.

5) Little research oriented literature exists to aid in making decisions concerning future handicapping through play. Discriminiation should be avoided perhaps particularly in the relatively new areas of computer toys and games (not addressed in this paper). If these games prepare one for integration into the corporate world with drill in special computer-like analytical skills, all children should have the benefits of this experience.

Obviously, the degrees of generalizability and transferability of the arguments made in this paper are limited. Yet it seems reasonable to begin looking at just such studies and discussions to find some important answers and question regarding organizational life.

Women now engaged in the process of integration into the corporate setting must certainly find a need to project a professional, even aloof corporate facade. The decisionsfor any woman to play a male game in the corporation is personal. Certainly a woman must at the very least familiarize herself with male strategy in order to stay in the game at all.

The study of female participation in the corporate world and its roots poses an exciting area of research for both male and female academicians. The development of new training methods in this area may also be challenging for management trainers and consultants. Certainly much time and money will be made and spent in the process.

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